MUSIC AMONG THE MIGHTY

By JAMES A. LEE

THOSE were good old days—the gentle and tender years marked by an utter lack of consideration for the neighbors—when "Uncle Joe" Cannon, known at one time as the Czar of the House of Representatives, sat on the banks of the Wabash far away and tore the heart right out of that complicated and stubborn musical instrument known as the jewsharp. There were other good old days—those lovely years emphasized by the country's conviction that every town should have a brass band, and make the trumpeting that knocked down the walls of Jericho sound like a whisper—when Senator Albert B. Cummins of Iowa blew his soul right through all the complex mechanism of a cornet.

With these preliminary remarks to bear us out, we rise to remark that not every musician is necessarily long haired and short witted, with a flowing necktie and an acute congestion of commonsense. There have been and are in the national capital today some of the nation's mightiest men, who hammer grand pianos into quivering spasms, or sing tender songs to Diana on her silver throne in the moon, or twang the banjo, or blow the oboe—and they do all these things without interfering with their work as constructive statesmen or great political leaders. As a matter of fact, charmed by the bars of melody, enraptured by the spirit, or entranced by a barbershop tenor, they outdo themselves, go further than they have ever done in their public lives, or rise above their prosaic and everyday convictions. There is the astounding case of Representative Richard Bartholdt of Missouri, who has spent the best years of his life trying to make the wings of the dove of peace grow so long that they will reach round the world. Put him down at a piano, tell him to play anything he wishes, and the first thing you know he is using his whiskers as a baton to keep time to the martial airs he plays while he dreams of cannonade and conquest, of thundering charge and bloody victory.

There is among the musical mighty a dead ringer for Apollo; that is, in performing, but not in stature. Apollo established himself as a member of the Musical Union when he won the prize by playing the zither; but, if Julius Kahn, the man with a dramatic past, but now a member of the House from California, had lived at that time, the chances are that the god of music would have been sent back to a night school to learn the real art of strumming the strings. Kahn, who used to play big Shakespearean roles in small Roman robes, at one time was even paid money for playing the zither—and anybody who can make money out of the zither is some zitherer.

BUT there were some more good old days—the brazen-throated years marked by the brain of the Missouri mule and the self-confidence of the Missouri man—when Champ Clark, filling his manly chest with all the musical consonance, concord, and blending of tones in that neck of the woods, taught singing school. None of the Clark pupils, up to date, have charmed Parisian audiences or drawn large salaries; but what they paid to Champ helped him along in life—and today he looks back upon that performance with such pride that every now and then he sings a few bars of that tender little thing, "Ever of Thee," which our grandmothers used to use as one means of dragging unwilling victims to the altar.

But Mr. Clark is not alone in preferring solitude and loneliness as his only audiences. Former President Taft got a lot of sweet and agreeable sounds out of his throat when he was absolutely convinced that the public wouldn't have a chance to carry in its memory any recollection of what it sounded like. Occasionally, when he was riding in the country with his friend Clarence Edwards, he let the bridle reins drop from his hands and unbridled his talent for song; but he confessed that he preferred even a smaller assemblage than Clarence to hear what he could do in the way of breaking the laws of harmony.

THEN there was Nick Longworth, a Representative from Ohio and the son in law of Colonel Roosevelt. Nick goes in for the really classical stuff on his violin, and there was a time when he was offered a salary as a vaudeville performer if he would stand before the footlights twice a day and fill the theater with the best things from such operas as Faust, Lucia, and all the other compositions that have made their authors famous and given the manufacturers of bass drums an immense amount of business. He confines himself, however, to ragtime on the piano and the highbrow performances on the violin for the benefit of his friends—and his friends, being kinder than most friends, swear that they enjoy every bit of it.

Sings a Few Bars of "Ever of Thee."

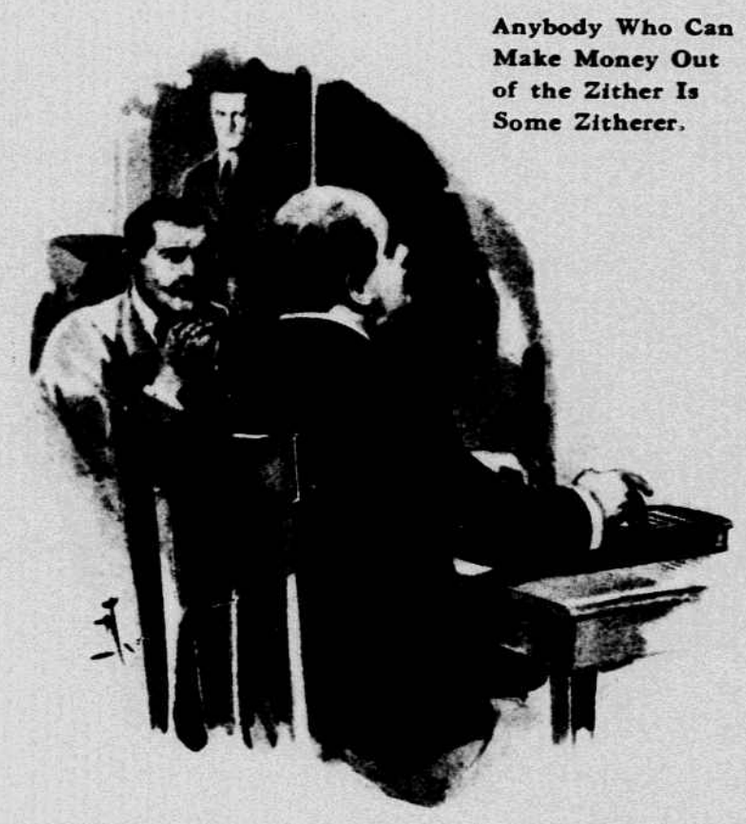
REPRESENTATIVE CARL C. ANDERSON of Ohio is proud—and he confesses it—of what his musical education did for him. He says it sent him to Congress, thereby putting him in the same class with the late Senator Bob Taylor of Tennessee, who made it a habit to play his old fiddle up and down the State, and with "Honey Fitz," who made his fight for the mayoralty of Boston by closing his speeches with a popular song that the crowds, much to his relief, helped him to sing.

"I started out as a mere boy to learn the first rudiments of music," said Representative Anderson not long ago, "and chose the guitar as my first instrument. Then I took up the violin, the best of all instruments for genuine expression. I also developed a barytone voice and sang at church sociables; but the violin was my best friend financially, for with it I made a few extra dollars to keep the wolf from the door. I used to play for country dances at first, then at city dances, and at last at resorts, one of which I later owned.

"Gus Mefort at one time organized a lightguard band at Fremont, Ohio, and bought four saxophones, the only instruments up to that time in the whole country. They were tenor, alto, soprano, and bass, and we formed a quartet and traveled round the country. I am now a member of the organization known as the American Federation of Musicians, and when running for my seat in Congress I had indorsements from Gompers, Mitchell, and Morse. This help, I know, was a big factor in my election. I was also at one time the leader in an opera house orchestra.

"Not long ago in New York I joined a dinner party at a café and bet with the men at the table, who had encored a number, that I could lead the orchestra and do as well as the regular leader had done. The bet was made. I handed the leader my union card, and asked him to let me lead a number. He asked me what instrument I would choose, and I left the selection to my party. They picked the violin. I had such an ovation from that table that they kept me busy for an hour and taught me the meaning of the nursery rime about little Tommy Tucker who sang for his supper. I have always been proud of my musical training; for, as I said in the first place, I owe my seat in Congress to the possession of my union card."

Anybody Who Can Make Money Out of the Zither Is Some Zitherer.



UNLIKE Mr. Anderson, Senator Cummins never made much money out of his musical talent. In fact, he gave up his career in that walk of life because he could not earn enough to keep his fiancée supplied with flowers. Among others who saw that there was not a fortune to be piled up by playing the piano or the violin, are Representatives Henry A. Cooper of Wisconsin, Morris Sheppard of Texas, Martin B. Madden of Illinois, and Senator Bradley of Kentucky. Only two weeks before "Fiddling Bob" Taylor of Tennessee died he and Senator Bradley were photographed in Bradley's office, Taylor playing his violin, and Bradley hustling things up on the guitar. After the photograph had been taken the two played "Buffalo Gals," "Turkey in the Straw," "Old Kentucky Home," and "Hang Up the Fiddle and the Bow" until everybody on that corridor was keeping time to the old melodies.

REPRESENTATIVE CYRUS SULLOWAY of New Hampshire, the biggest man in Congress, tried to get into the midst of the musical mighty when he was a boy.

"In those days," he described his experience, "the only way to get a musical education was to join a singing school for a term of lessons, usually held in the church. Like the rest, I let my voice out to its full capacity. Following the lesson, the kind-hearted woman who was trying to teach us pointed to my corner and said, 'I thought I heard a strange noise back there in that corner, and I want the boy who made it to admit to me whether or not he was really trying to sing.' That discouraged me absolutely. I grabbed my singing book and went straight home. I sometimes reflect, however, that if I had not let my voice out so ferociously that first morning I might have developed into the greatest bass singer in the world."

There can be no doubt of the fact that music has a strong influence on people who are close to the Tafts. There was the case of Gus J. Karger, the publicity adviser for that administration. He had accompanied the President and his party on a trip across the country, and one morning Mr. Taft and his followers, having been invited to hear the wonderful organ and choir in the Mormon Tabernacle at Salt Lake City, were seated so that they faced the entire assemblage. Finally the choir sang "Old Folks at Home," and almost immediately Mr. Karger wept copiously. Everybody saw him, but he did not seem to care. After they had left the tabernacle, the President said to Gus:

"Gus, you almost disgraced us this morning. You cried like a baby. What was the matter?"

"Mr. President," replied Gus in great sorrow, "I am far from home, and, if it's all the same to you, I do wish you'd make your trips a little shorter."

Referring to the Taft taste for music, Jim Faulkner, the dean of American newspaper men, told on one occasion of how Mrs.